

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

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INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

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AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV, ASEAN

SUBJECT: ASEAN - EA/COM MEETING WITH APCAC

REF: STATE 287130

1. GEORGE SUTER, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF ASEAN MATTERS WITHIN AMCHAM AND WHO WILL SHORTLY TAKE OVER THE AMCHAM PRESIDENCY FROM BILL DUNNING (BEING TRANSFERRED TO NEW YORK), STATES THAT THE APCAC PLAN TO RAISE THE ASEAN REGIONAL INDUSTRY CLUBS AT THE MEETING WITH THE CHIEFS OF MISSIONS RELATES TO THE ANTI-TRUST IMPLICATIONS FOR THOSE AMERICAN FIRMS PARTICIPATING IN THE CLUBS. HE SAID FLATLY, "WE (THE AMERICAN COMPANIES) WILL TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES ON ENTRY AND PARTICIPATION, BUT WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT THE USG ATTITUDE IS ON ANTI-TRUST."

2. SUTER STATED THAT THE AMCHAM IS NOT CONCERNED THAT THE CLUBS WILL DISCRIMINATE AGAINST FOREIGN INVESTORS. HE CITED THE ASSURANCES WHICH FRED ELIZALDE, PRESIDENT OF THE ASEAN CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY, GAVE TO AMCHAM MEMBERS DURING A RECENT MEETING TO DISCUSS ASEAN DEVELOPMENTS.

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ELIZALDE SAID THAT AMERICAN AND OTHER FOREIGN INVESTORS ARE ELIGIBLE FOR FULL MEMBERSHIP IN THE INDUSTRY CLUBS.

3. SUTER ALSO POINTED OUT THAT SECRETARY OF INDUSTRY PATERNO HAD ASSURED HIM THAT THE PREFERENTIAL TARIFF ARRANGEMENTS APPLY TO ANY PRODUCT MEETING THE RULES OF ORIGIN, IRRESPECTIVE OF THE NATIONALITY OF THE EQUITY HOLDERS OF THE MANUFACTURING

FIRM. (SEE MANILA 16933, PARA 5.)

4. THERE IS AS YET NO GREAT RUSH BY AMERICAN FIRMS TO JOIN OR PARTICIPATE IN THE REGIONAL INDUSTRY CLUBS. THE ORGANIZATIONS ARE STILL EMBRYONIC, AND ALL THE AMCHAM CAN DO NOW IS TO MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH THE ASEAN BODIES AND WATCH THEM CLOSELY. MUCH WILL ALSO DEPEND ON THE INDUSTRY INVOLVED. E.G., THE DRUG INDUSTRY, IN WHICH SUTER'S COMPANY (PFIZER) FALLS, IS WELL ESTABLISHED IN ALL OF THE ASEAN COUNTRIES, AND SUTER FEELS THAT THE MULTINATIONALS CAN CONTRIBUTE ON COMPLEMENTATION SCHEMES AND IN HIGH TECHNOLOGY WHENEVER ASEAN POLICY REGARDING THIS INDUSTRY DEVELOPS IN THAT DIRECTION.

5. COMMENT. WE BELIEVE SUTER'S ASSESSMENT IS VALID, AND HIS ATTITUDE SENSIBLE AND CORRECT. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE USG AND AMERICAN COMPANIES SHOULD ASSUME THE WORST ABOUT THE CLUBS, THAT IS, THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR BEING USED TO DISCRIMINATE AGAINST FOREIGN INVESTORS. WE HAVE SUFFICIENT ASSURANCES TO THE CONTRARY, AND WE SHOULD HOLD THE ASSURERS TO THEIR WORD. IN THE MEANTIME, IT SEEMS PRUDENT THAT WE AVOID BEING OVERLY ANXIOUS OR EAGER TO EMBRACE THE CLUBS, LEST WE AROUSE UNWARRANTED SUSPICIONS OF OUR MOTIVES AND THUS BRING ABOUT THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN OUR RELATIONS WITH ASEAN.

NEWSOM

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